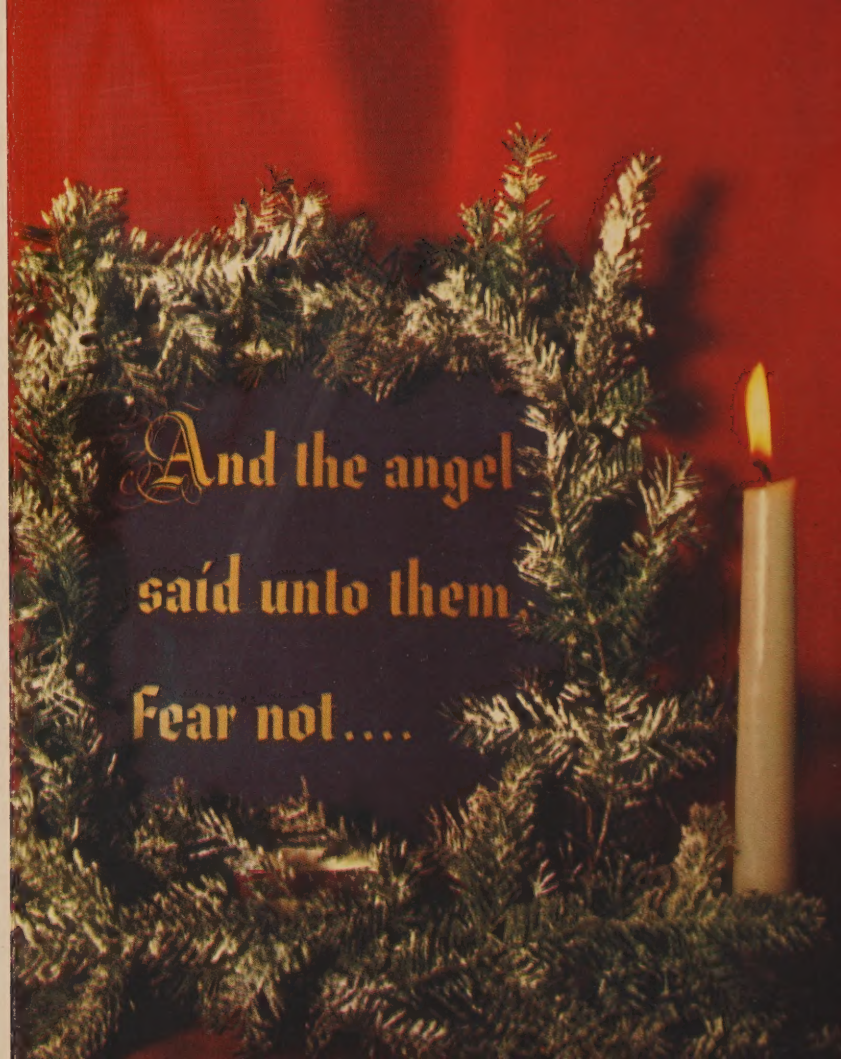


CPH LITHO IN U. S. A. 67 - 1035

To SK + staff from Mrs Arthur C French III
So. C Morgan
Rialto, Calif.

JAN 4 1961

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French Fds.

CHRISTMAS 1960

1960 brought the Frenches two unusual trips - both made after important decisions, and both big events.

The first was our move to Savoonga, the other village on St. Lawrence Island, accessible only by skin boat in summer and by dogsled in winter. The church there has been without a resident missionary for 2 years and has never had a missionary family. This concerned us deeply and our faith was strengthened by the Eskimos' faith as they carried on during this time. God's call to the work there came clearly last winter and as a result seemingly insurmountable barriers crumbled. It was arranged for us to be transported from Gambell to Savoonga via the government yearly supply freighter.

July 1st the NORTH STAR pulled onto our beach. To do this the ship hits the shore at half speed ahead and keeps the engines on at full speed ahead to keep the bow on the beach with the stern in 60 feet of water. As the ship unloaded, we worked feverishly typing 4 copies of the manifest and computing the cubic foot measurement of each piece. At 1:15 a.m. we were called to board, rode on the LCM to the side of the ship, and were hoisted up to the deck on a 6' x 6' platform. At 4 a.m. the ship left Gambell. Three hours later we anchored off Savoonga. Due to rough sea we spent 3 days on ship enjoying delicious meals and much needed rest. Cathy, the life of the party, won her way into the hearts of the crew.

July 4th unloading from ship to skin boat began. Although hundreds of trips were made only 1 case of goods was lost. At the beach, due to rough surf and treacherous rocks, a line was formed into the water and everything passed along the human chain onto the shore and was hauled up a steep hill. This work was done mostly by women and children as many men were away on construction jobs. We went ashore in the evening, and at home found a large sign illustrated with Eskimos in old fashioned dress and saying, "Welcome Home Frenches". Art and some Eskimo women spent 21 hours longshoring our supplies, hampered by heavy rain and boggy tundra.

Summer and fall continued in full swing. A friend from the American Museum in New York was with us 6 weeks studying the Eskimos and helping us get settled. The whole village was invited to Cathy's first birthday party and 18 cakes were consumed. A National Missions representative spent 2 weeks surveying the work. Finally a DCE spent a month conducting a much needed training program for Sunday School teachers.

Another French was on the way and, as there is no resident doctor, plans were made for Cathy and me to winter in California. Intentions to travel from Savoonga to Gambell by boat failed when winter came early, so we travelled by dogsled. One man built a frame for the sled to support a tent with a full-length zipper. Inside I lay on a sleeping bag and 2 spring pillows with Cathy between my legs. It took 5 teams, each with 14 dogs, to get the DCE, an elder, our baggage and us to Gambell. We left early November 1st. Going was slow due to soft snow and much rocky terrain. 5 hours and 20 miles later we reached the first camp and stayed all night with an Eskimo family in an army surplus hut. We laid our sleeping bags on a large platform which extended the width of the hut 3 feet above the floor. The next day, travel was further hampered by steady wind blowing wet snow, making passes through the mountains harder to traverse. Eight hours and 25 miles later we reached another camp where we ate and stretched our legs! Five hours and 20 miles more got us to a third "rest camp", and finally after another 2 hours and 10 miles we reached Gambell. Travel from Gambell to L.A. was completed in 12 hours flying time, ending with jet travel!

Arrangements are for Art to join us in February and have a 4-month furlough before our return to Savoonga.

Much has happened during this year, and we are ever grateful for God's providential care over us. We can surely testify with the psalmist, "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God; in Him will I trust." Psalm 91:2.

Carolyn, Art and Cathy French

Best wishes
for a joyous Christmas
and a
New Year enriched
by an abiding faith
in the
Babe of Bethlehem

*Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.*

*II Corinthians 9:15*